UNITED NATIONS **S**

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/2000/122
16 February 2000
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

LETTER DATED 11 FEBRUARY 2000 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government and further to my letter dated 28 January 2000 (S/2000/67), I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the memorandum of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the humanitarian catastrophe currently taking place in the Ituri district, more specifically in Blukwa, situated in the area around Lake Albert to the south-east of the town of Djugu and to the north-east of the town of Bunia, in Orientale province, following the massacres and atrocities committed by regular Ugandan armed forces, backed by their accomplices of the Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie (RCD) (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) André MWAMBA KAPANGA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Appeal to the international community by the Democratic Republic of the Congo concerning the humanitarian catastrophe in the Ituri district which has been brought about with the active participation of Ugandan troops and their Congolese accomplices of the Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie (RCD)

(8 January 2000)

The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the Ministry of Human Rights, thanks you for responding to its invitation.

It wishes, through you, to draw the attention of the national and the international community to the human tragedy, which has now reached catastrophic humanitarian proportions, taking place in the Ituri district of Orientale province, more specifically in the area around Djugu in the part of the country occupied by Ugandan troops and administered with the help of their Congolese accomplices of the Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie (RCD) (Wamba-dia-Wamba wing).

Some 5,000 men, women and children have died as a result of violent, bloody clashes and confrontations between Hema and Lendu. Almost as many people have been injured and 150,000 persons have been displaced. The British non-governmental organization Christian Blind Mission has warned repeatedly about this situation but there has been no meaningful response from the international community.

Only recently, during the special meetings of the United Nations Security Council on the situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Ugandan President, Mr. Yoweri Museveni, tried to suggest that Uganda's presence in Ituri was justified by the fact that one of the parties to the inter-ethnic conflict belongs, according to his megalomaniac vision, in the Ugandan fold, and also that he was acting to protect a minority tribe.

The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo wishes to emphasize that, apart from the usual tensions and incidents inherent in any social coexistence and which have always met with amicable solutions, the Hema and the Lendu have always lived in perfect harmony and understanding and even share the same language.

Between Hema and Lendu, there are no invaders or invaded. They are both equally Congolese.

The old cliché about land disputes between growers and herders, the boundaries of whose land are far from clear, does not hold up here.

If Hema and Lendu have always lived together without too much friction for decades and even centuries, the Congolese nation is justified today in wondering what is the reason for the extent of the killings, massacres and other

atrocities now going on. Who lit the match? Who is fuelling the fire and keeping it going?

In the view of the Government and people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, primary responsibility for all that is happening in that province - tortures, kidnappings, ethnic pogroms - lies with Uganda and, more particularly, with Yoweri Museveni himself. Since 2 August 1998, the day the war of aggression against the Democratic Republic of the Congo started, Orientale province has been under the control of Ugandan troops. Uganda is responsible for administration, law and order and security in the province, and it has even gone so far as to give the province a new name - Kibali-Ituri province.

A master of manipulation, President Museveni is posing as the protector of ethnic minorities in Ituri. In other words, his presence and his intervention are justifiable to prevent or halt a genocide of one of the tribes in Ituri.

But who is a minority in Ituri district, the most heavily populated in the Republic with roughly 3.7 million inhabitants? Neither the Bahema nor the Balendu are minority groups, and the Alur even less. One could cite the Bira, the Nyali, the Lese or, better yet, the Pygmies. Paradoxically, none of these minority tribes has been the object of Ugandan concern.

The fact remains that Ituri is a veritable mosaic of peoples belonging to different ethnic groupings. It is in fact one of the few places where all the population groups of sub-Saharan Africa are represented. Nilotics, Bantu, Sudanese and Pygmies have lived there together for centuries, more or less contentedly.

It is thus clear that the massacres taking place can only be the work of an invisible foreign hand in the Ituri district, namely the hand of Museveni, who acts by using and manipulating ethnic groups, stirring up old rivalries and fanning them at will, arming one group against another. What is more, even the Ugandan troops do not hesitate to fire on groups of persons in markets or in church doorways and blame it on this or that group. Such an incendiary policy threatens to send the whole region up in flames and instil a culture of genocide which is unknown in Congolese tradition.

The Government of National Salvation and the Congolese people cannot continue to tolerate the routinization of genocide as a tool for achieving the hegemonic goals of Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi.

In fact, faced with an increasingly organized resistance from the Congolese people living in the occupied territories, Museveni and his troops are trying vainly to apply the Latin proverb "divide ut imperes" (divide and conquer) to the Hema and Lendu people of the Congo. In the present context the situation is more accurately one of divide and conquer and loot the wealth of the Congo.

While mass slaughter goes on, Museveni, his family members, his entourage, his army officers and his henchmen can calmly proceed systematically to loot the various riches that are to be found in this part of the country: gold, coffee, timber and rare species of fauna, such as the okapi and the white rhinoceros. And all of this is done in violation of the 1973 Convention on International

Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the 1981 African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights and the UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage of 23 November 1972 as well as of General Assembly resolution 1803 (XVII) of 14 December 1962, on permanent sovereignty over natural resources, and the relevant provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949.

The Government of National Salvation, which is responsible for the protection and welfare of the entire Congolese population, cannot remain impassive at the magnitude of the human tragedy now taking place in Ituri. Once again, the aggressor troops and their Congolese accomplices are violating the fundamental principles and rules of both the International Bill of Human Rights and international humanitarian law.

The essential cause of this state of affairs continues to be the presence of armed occupation forces in the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which prevents the Government of National Salvation from effectively exercising control over the entire country, primarily to ensure the security of property and individuals.

So long as aggressor troops are present in Congolese territory the threat remains that there will be further massacres such as those that occurred at Ituri, at Makobola and at Kasika; that men, women and children will again be burned to death, as at Kasala; that rapes such those that took place near Kabinda will recur; and that women will again be buried alive, as they were at Mwenga.

Accordingly, the Government of National Salvation calls upon the international community to:

Formally condemn and denounce the armed aggression against the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for it continues to be the main source of all violations of human rights and international humanitarian law;

Order, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1234 (1999) of 9 April 1999, all uninvited foreign forces to withdraw immediately from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

Dispatch an international commission of inquiry, headed by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to investigate Ituri district and all other crimes and massacres committed by foreign troops of aggression and their Congolese accomplices, particularly the events at Mwenga, during which 15 women were buried alive;

Hold President Yoweri Museveni and the Rwandan Vice-President, Kagame, accountable for the commission, directly or indirectly, of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The Government of National Salvation, and with it the entire Congolese people, can only express its astonishment at the fact that all these crimes continue to be perpetrated notwithstanding the presence of the United Nations Observer Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC).

MONUC is therefore requested, within the framework of the provisions of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, particularly article III, paragraph 10, to ensure that the Ugandan aggressor State and the Wamba-dia-Wamba wing of RCD facilitate the opening of a humanitarian corridor and the creation of favourable conditions to allow local leaders residing outside Ituri and religious authorities to travel there to work for peace and bring solace to the population.

The Government of National Salvation urges the communities concerned, Hema and Lendu, to make an exceptional effort and ensure that Congolese problems are dealt with by Congolese. May they not give the Ugandans an excuse to use this situation to make their presence a permanent one.

The Government of National Salvation continues to believe that there can be no satisfactory or lasting solution without a halt of the aggression and the withdrawal of foreign forces.

Social calm and peaceful coexistence between Hema and Lendu absolutely cannot be restored by the aggressors, who are the architects of this conflict. It is therefore imperative, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1234 (1999) and the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, to help the Congolese Government re-establish its authority throughout the entire country.

For the Government of National Salvation:

YERODIA ABDOULAYE NDOMBASI
Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

Léonard SHE OKITUNDU
Minister for Human Rights

UNITED NATIONS **S**

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/2000/123
16 February 2000
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

IDENTICAL LETTERS DATED 15 FEBRUARY 2000 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 14 February 2000 from Mr. Tariq Aziz, Deputy Prime Minister and Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq. It concerns the ongoing United States and British aggression against Iraq in the unlawful no-flight zones and the fact that on 9 February 2000 United States and British aircraft bombed many civilian and services-related installations in southern and northern Iraq, killing a number of innocent citizens and causing serious damage to civilian installations.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Saeed H. HASAN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Identical letters dated 14 February 2000 from the Deputy Prime Minister and Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I should like to inform you that on 9 February 2000 the United States of America and the United Kingdom committed another brutal crime in southern Iraq further to the series of heinous crimes these two States have been committing on a daily basis against the Republic of Iraq and its security and integrity. The particulars of this cowardly act are set forth hereunder.

From 1355 hours on 9 February 2000, 16 formations of United States and British aircraft carried out 50 missions, 24 of them from Saudi territory and 26 from Kuwaiti territory, with the support of an AWACS early-warning aircraft operating inside Saudi airspace and an E-2C aircraft operating inside Kuwaiti airspace. They overflew several of Iraq's southern governorates, namely Basrah, Dhi Qar, Maysan, Qadisiyah, Muthanna, Najaf and Wasit. They bombed a number of civilian and services-related installations, killing three Iraqi civilians and wounding eight others and causing serious material damage.

From 1130 hours on the same day, eight formations of United States and British aircraft carried out 16 missions from Turkish airspace with the support of an AWACS aircraft. They overflew the Ninawa and Dohuk Governorates in northern Iraq and bombed civilian and services-related installations in Ninawa Governorate, causing material damage.

We condemn these repeated acts of criminal aggression against our country, and we call upon the Security Council to censure them and to intervene with the governments of the United States of America and the United Kingdom with a view to inducing them to suspend the acts of aggression in which they are engaging against Iraq, to bring them to an end and to desist from any future repetition. The Government of the Republic of Iraq will hold all the States involved fully responsible for these acts of aggression and for the material and moral damage they have caused to the country, both those whose aircraft carry out these criminal acts and those in whose territory the aircraft are based, namely Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Turkey.

The military aggression of these two States, committed on the pretext of defending the measures taken to protect the no-flight zones in northern and southern Iraq being maintained by them unrightfully and without any legal basis, is a desperate attempt to justify their continued hostility to Iraq. We also affirm in this connection the legally established right of Republic of Iraq to seek compensation for all the material and moral damage sustained by the country as a result of actions that are incompatible with the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law.

(Signed) Tariq AZIZ
Deputy Prime Minister
Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs

United Nations S/2000/124

Security Council

Distr.: General
16 February 2000

Original: English

Letter dated 10 February 2000 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have pleasure in enclosing my assessment of the work of the Security Council for the month of December 1999. This has been prepared on my own responsibility but following consultations with members of the Council, and should not be considered as representing the views of the Security Council.

I should be grateful if this could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Jeremy **Greenstock**

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Annex

Assessment of the work of the Security Council

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (December 1999)

Under the presidency of Sir Jeremy Greenstock, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Security Council dealt with a number of difficult and sensitive issues in December, in particular concerning Africa and Iraq. The British Foreign Office Minister responsible for Africa, Peter Hain, presided over two meetings of the Council: a briefing on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and a debate on practical ways to address the problems of Africa. During December the Council adopted five resolutions and held 10 meetings, and its members met in informal consultations on 13 occasions. Two troop contributor meetings were held.

As part of its commitment to improving the transparency of the workings of the Security Council, the United Kingdom Presidency held one debate (on Africa) and three briefings (on Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and East Timor) at public meetings and one briefing (on Kosovo) at a private meeting of the Council. The President addressed the news media after each session of informal consultations of the members and was authorized to make 13 statements to the press on specific issues on behalf of Council members. Immediately after informal consultations, the Presidency gave briefings for countries not members of the Security Council. Through its web site, the Presidency published the Council's programme of work and the President's statements to the press on a daily basis.

Africa

Open debate

On 15 December, the Security Council debated the United Nations partnership with Africa at a public meeting. The Presidency had sought Member States' cooperation in making this an innovative, interactive meeting, asking them to focus on three specific questions, namely:

1. How can we improve coordination and cooperation between the Security Council, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and key subregional organizations, including coordination of joint activity on specific issues?

2. How can we meet the needs of African peacekeeping more effectively and more quickly?

3. What additional instruments can we as a Council bring to bear to help solve and, where possible, prevent conflicts in Africa?

To allow time for discussion, the Presidency sought to keep interventions to under five minutes.

This proved to be a useful meeting. Council members and most other participants focused on the three key questions and kept their interventions commendably brief. Unfortunately some speakers were less disciplined and the opportunity to achieve a genuine discussion was more limited than the Presidency had hoped. Nevertheless, the President, on a personal basis, was able to draw some constructive conclusions from the discussion, which were circulated to the membership (see below).

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Security Council heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Bernard Miyet, at a public meeting on the Democratic Republic of the Congo on 16 December, at which Ambassador Holbrooke of the United States also briefed the Council on his recent trip to the region. On 21 December, Council members were briefed on the latest developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hédi Annabi. This focused on the security situation, in particular the government offensive launched in Equateur Province as well as heightened military activity by the "negative forces". The Assistant Secretary-General highlighted the risk of the current volatile situation leading to a security crisis in the Kivus. He stressed that it was important that parties refrain from hostile propaganda. Council members continued their consideration of these developments on 22 December and the Assistant Secretary-General supplemented his briefing with

reporting on the deployment of United Nations military liaison officers, which was meeting with some obstacles. After the consultations, the Council President made a statement to the press reflecting points raised by Council members (see below).

Sierra Leone

The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations briefed the Security Council on Sierra Leone at a public meeting on 10 December. His briefing focused on the contents of the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), issued on 6 December, and on the latest security situation.

On 29 December, the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations briefed Council members on the Secretary-General's letter of 23 December to the President of the Council, in which the Secretary-General reported the Nigerian decision to withdraw its ECOMOG troops and consequently recommended the expansion of UNAMSIL. The Assistant Secretary-General told Council members that the Secretariat would make more detailed proposals on this by 20 January. Members of the Council expressed agreement in principle to the expansion of UNAMSIL. Following the consultation, the President of the Council made a statement to the press (see below).

Burundi

The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Kieran Prendergast, briefed Council members on 3 December on his November 1999 visit to Africa concerning Burundi. He had met the Chairman of OAU, the Heads of State of Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe and senior officials of Rwanda and South Africa. The briefing focused on the regional States' views on the search for a new mediator (preceding the appointment of former President Mandela) and on the Secretariat's assessment of the political, security and humanitarian situation in Burundi; the prospects for further progress in the Burundi peace process; and the role of the United Nations and donor countries in the search for peace in Burundi.

On behalf of Council members, the President of the Council made a statement to the press, inter alia, welcoming the designation of former President Mandela as the new facilitator for the Arusha peace process (see below). Council members also agreed that the President should invite the new facilitator to brief the Security Council about his plans for taking the Burundi peace process forward. On 3 December, the President wrote to the South African Ambassador asking him to convey an invitation to former President Mandela on behalf of the Council. (Former President Mandela took up this invitation in January 2000.)

On 8 December, Council experts met to discuss how the Security Council could sharpen its focus on Burundi. They agreed that the Council should make more use of public and private meetings and informal consultations of its members on Burundi — the format to be decided by the objective of the meeting.

Angola

The Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations briefed council members on 13 December on the Angolan military offensive against UNITA, the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Angola, and the continuing efforts to conclude a status-of-mission agreement to establish a United Nations Office in Angola in accordance with resolution 1268 (1999). On behalf of Council members, the President made a statement to the press (see below).

Eritrea and Ethiopia

The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs briefed Council members on 21 December on the efforts of OAU to resolve the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea and on the humanitarian situation in both countries. He underlined the need for patience and discretion at a delicate stage in the mediation process.

Somalia

The Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Ibrahima Fall, briefed Council members on the political and humanitarian situation in Somalia on 30 December. He referred in particular to the forum organized by the United Nations Political Office for Somalia at Nairobi on 16 November and the meeting of the Standing Committee also at Nairobi on 15 December. At both meetings there was broad support for President Guelleh's recent peace proposals, which were to be developed in more detail over the next two months. On behalf of Council members, the President made a statement to the press condemning the continuing flow of arms into Somalia in contravention

of Council resolutions and calling for the arms embargo to be respected.

Western Sahara

During informal consultations on 9 December the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations briefed Council members on progress towards the implementation of the settlement plan in Western Sahara. Council members discussed a draft resolution on 13 and 14 December. Concerns were expressed in particular about the possible delay to the referendum until 2002 or even beyond. On 14 December the Council adopted resolution 1282 (1999) by 14 votes in favour, with one abstention, extending the mandate of the United Nations Mission for a Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) until 29 February 2000 and asking the Secretary-General to report again before that deadline.

Guinea-Bissau

The Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs briefed Council members on 29 December on the Secretary-General's report of 23 December which followed the elections held on 28 November in Guinea-Bissau. The President was authorized to issue a statement to the press, inter alia, approving the Secretary-General's recommendation to extend the mandate of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) until the end of March 2000 (see below).

Iraq

Negotiations on a new way forward on Iraq had begun earlier in the year following the issue of the reports of the expert panels under the chairmanship of Ambassador Celso Amorim (S/1999/356), which addressed the three principal aspects of the Iraq issue, namely, disarmament, the humanitarian programme and Kuwaiti missing persons and property. These negotiations intensified during December, both in a series of informal consultations and in private contacts, and culminated on 17 December with the adoption of resolution 1284 (1999), sponsored by the United Kingdom, by 11 votes in favour, with 4 abstentions. Resolution 1284 (1999) sets out a new, comprehensive approach to Iraq based on Iraq's obligations under the existing Council resolutions and establishes a new body, the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, to pursue compliance with Iraq's disarmament obligations under previous resolutions. All Council members affirmed that the resolution had now to be fully implemented (see S/PV.4084).

Oil for food

The Council adopted two resolutions concerning the implementation of the oil-for-food humanitarian programme in Iraq. On 3 December, by resolution 1280 (1999), the programme was extended for one week. The resolution was adopted by 11 votes in favour, with 3 abstentions. One Council member did not participate in the vote. On 10 December, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1281 (1999), by which it extended the programme for a further six months.

Asia

Afghanistan

Pending the appointment of a chairman, the Presidency chaired two meetings of the Afghanistan sanctions committee to discuss the application of measures under paragraph 4 of resolution 1267 (1999). On 22 December the Committee agreed on a list of aircraft subject to paragraph 4 (a) of resolution 1267 (1999), which was subsequently issued as a press release to all Member States.

East Timor

The Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations briefed the Security Council on East Timor at a public meeting on 22 December. The briefing focused on the security situation in East Timor, plans for the handover of responsibility for security from the international force (INTERFET) to the peacekeeping element of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), the humanitarian situation in East Timor including refugee return from West Timor, and the deployment of the civilian elements of UNTAET.

Members of the Council welcomed the excellent progress made by INTERFET and UNTAET and the success of the Tokyo donor conference held on 17 December. Concerns were raised by some about the rate of refugee return from West Timor and the need to ensure that the transition from INTERFET to UNTAET be completed as soon as possible.

Europe

Kosovo

Council members heard a briefing by the Secretariat on 21 December on the attack of 17 December on a Serb café in the town of Orahovac in Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in which seven ethnic Serbs had been wounded and one killed.

The Security Council held a private meeting on 30 December to consider the Secretary-General's report of 23 December on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), and to hear a supplementary briefing by the Secretariat.

Cyprus

The Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus, Alvaro de Soto, briefed Council members on 2 December on the proximity talks due to begin in New York on 3 December. After the consultations the Council President made a statement to the press, welcoming the parties' agreement to start talks, expressing the hope that all concerned would participate without preconditions and in a constructive spirit and offering full support for United Nations efforts.

On 7 December Council members discussed the Secretary-General's report of 1 December on Cyprus, covering both the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and the Secretary-General's mission of good offices. A short statement to the press was issued.

The Special Adviser to the Secretary-General briefed Council members on 14 December following the conclusion of the Cyprus proximity talks held in New York from 3 to 14 December. Council members also considered a draft resolution to extend the mandate of UNFICYP, which was to expire on 15 December. After the consultations the President made a statement to the press (see below).

On 15 December the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1283 (1999), extending the mandate of UNFICYP for a further six months, until 15 June 2000.

Security Council procedures and improved transparency

The United Kingdom Presidency's efforts to improve transparency by holding more meetings in the Council chamber open to all Members of the United Nations or, in certain cases, to those with a particular interest have been noted above. As part of its policy of encouraging greater openness and efficiency in the work of the Council, the United Kingdom delegation had earlier in the year introduced a draft note by the President of the Council on the need for increased recourse to public meetings, including on situations involving specific countries, on the availability of draft resolutions and presidential statements as soon as they are introduced in informal consultations, and on the practice of press briefings by the Presidency. This draft note was considered during the course of 1999 in the Council's informal working group on documentation and procedures, where the suggestions of other Council members were taken into account, and was completed at informal discussions on 30 December by the inclusion of a paragraph recognizing the broad range of options for public and private Council meetings that can be used to facilitate specific discussions (see S/1999/1291). This reflects the growing practice of the Council of considering both thematic and country-specific matters at public or private meetings, rather than in informal consultations of members.

Millennium reception

To mark the end of the century and the millennium the Security Council members held a reception at United Nations Headquarters on 29 December to which the Secretary-General, senior members of the Secretariat, heads of United Nations bodies and all Permanent Representatives were invited.

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United Nations partnership with Africa: open debate of the Security Council (15 December 1999)

Conclusions drawn by Peter Hain, MP, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, on his own responsibility as President of the Council

We have heard a lot today about double standards. We must replace double standards by common purpose. We must replace divided counsels by common action. Today's debate is a big step forward in doing so.

I would now like to draw some conclusions from the debate, which will, I hope, feed into the council's future work. I shall make them public and distribute them to all Member States.

How can we improve coordination and cooperation between the Security Council, OAU and the key subregional organizations, including coordination of joint activity on specific issues?

There was a broad consensus that we should try to institute regular and more structured consultation and coordination between the Council and OAU, and the regional bodies. A number of useful suggestions have been made: joint envoys and missions, exchange of staff, working groups and more regular meetings between the Security Council, OAU and subregional bodies.

I hope the Council will now work up some detailed proposals so that decisions can be taken before the end of January on what we should be doing, and how.

How can we meet the needs of African peacekeeping more effectively and more quickly?

The views we have heard today, particularly from African Member States, send a clear message. The United Nations is not responding quickly or effectively enough to meet the peacekeeping needs of Africa. We heard today many useful practical suggestions: increasing capacity and planning in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations; enhancing its ability to hold more, and more quickly deploy, stocks of key equipment; and further United Nations help to build Africa's own peacekeeping capabilities through, inter alia, training, personnel exchange and logistics partnership arrangements. These are all critical elements in the package. The Council today has given strong support for taking them forward.

Participants have been equally clear that providing the right resources is critical. The importance of matching resources to mandates has also been widely stressed. So have the limitations of trust fund financing for peacekeeping. The need for more support for regional peacekeeping efforts was stressed by a number of delegations.

It is clear from the debate today that none of these measures is a substitute for greater political engagement from the Council in conflict in Africa. Only with that will there be greater engagement by the United Nations in peacekeeping there, and greater success.

What additional instruments can we as the Council bring to bear to help solve and, where possible, prevent conflicts in Africa?

A wide variety of important proposals have been raised today: preventive deployments; more use of Security Council missions; imaginative use of Friends or contact or other forms of support groups; better cooperation between the Council and the Economic and Social Council, especially in building peace after conflict; better use of the variety of diplomatic channels available to us; improved coordination and cooperation with regional and subregional groups; more effective collective diplomatic action by the Council and the wider United Nations membership; and stricter and more targeted implementation of the Council's other key tool, sanctions and arms embargoes.

Many speakers stressed the crucial importance of preventive action to address root causes of conflict. Several speakers called for greater focus on AIDS (5,500 Africans are dying each day from the disease, as the Secretary-General has pointed out). The need to ensure the rights of minorities and genuine power sharing in divided societies to prevent conflict was stressed.

Many speakers have pointed to the need for better early warning and exchange of analysis. If this is to succeed we must all — Secretariat, OAU and Member States — contribute. Potential conflict zones must be brought to the Council's attention, enabling it to act in time. It is the responsibility of all of us to use the

Council to do this and to strengthen existing early warning mechanisms, including those of OAU.

I shall ask our Permanent Representative to start work with others around this table to ensure action by the Council as quickly as possible. I hope that we will see the first results within the next few weeks. Today's debate shows that all of us want to move quickly.

I want to conclude with an observation. Africa still gets a bad press and Africa has many real problems; but all those of us who know and love Africa know that Africa can and will build a better future for itself. A future of peace, prosperity and democracy. The people who will build lasting peace in Africa are the people of Africa itself; but it is our duty to help them. Today's debate shows that the Council, and the wider United Nations membership, are resolved to do so.

Statements to the press by the President of the Security Council

Cyprus (2 December 1999)

Security Council members today heard a briefing by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus, Alvaro de Soto. This is a matter which the Security Council continues to follow with the closest of interest. The Council has stated repeatedly that the status quo in Cyprus is unacceptable.

In June, the Council requested the Secretary-General, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, to invite the leaders of the two sides to negotiations this autumn. Council members welcomed, therefore, the agreement of the parties to start proximity talks in New York on 3 December in order to prepare the ground for meaningful negotiations leading to a comprehensive settlement. They expressed the hope that all concerned would participate in the talks without preconditions and in a constructive spirit. They commended the efforts of the Secretary-General, his Special Representative and Special Adviser to facilitate the talks and conveyed to them the Council's full support. They looked forward to a further briefing from Mr. de Soto on the progress of the talks soon after these had concluded.

Burundi (3 December 1999)

This morning, the Security Council heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Kieran Prendergast, on Burundi. They expressed their deepest concern at the ongoing violence in Burundi against the background of a fragile situation in the region more widely, and appealed to all parties to the conflict to cease hostilities immediately. They likewise expressed concern at the worsening humanitarian situation and called for full, unhindered and safe access for all United Nations and international humanitarian and human rights workers in Burundi. They called for a greater focus on the protection of individual rights in the country.

They repeated their concern at the policy of forced regroupment and called on the Government of Burundi to allow the affected people to return to their homes with full and unhindered access throughout the process. They commended those Burundian parties, including the Government, that have demonstrated their commitment to continue negotiations, and called on those parties that remain outside the process to cease hostilities and for their full participation in Burundi's inclusive peace process.

They recognized Burundi's dire economic and social conditions and the need for the donor community to expand assistance for Burundi. They welcomed the designation by the eighth Arusha regional summit of former President Nelson Mandela as the new facilitator for the Arusha peace process. They were grateful for his willingness to take on the task of searching for a peaceful solution to the crisis and offered their full support. They encouraged all parties to show flexibility and to cooperate fully with the new facilitator.

They looked forward to the earliest possible resumption of the talks. They reiterated their view that only a negotiated settlement can bring peace, stability and prosperity to Burundi. They decided to remain closely engaged on the issue.

Cyprus (7 December 1999)

Security Council members heard a short briefing by the Secretariat on Cyprus. They had a short discussion reflecting the fact that the priority at the moment, in terms of substance, was the talks under the auspices of the Secretary-General. We want those talks to proceed within the framework which the Secretary-General has set, which is quite a closed and

confidential one of which the Council is not getting into the substance while the talks are going on. We noted that we would have to renew the mandate by 15 December and that there is room in the timetable for that.

Western Sahara (9 December 1999)

The Council members discussed Western Sahara on the basis of quite a detailed briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Bernard Miyet, on the basis of the report which the Secretary-General issued a few days ago. That report contained the recommendation that the mandate of MINURSO be extended to the end of February. That recommendation was discussed in a very positive spirit. The group concerned with Western Sahara is this afternoon drafting a resolution to give effect to that recommendation, which will come before the Council in the next few days. There is a considerable amount of substance on this subject to which the Council will return during the extension period that we are about to agree to.

Sierra Leone (10 December 1999)

The Council members had a very interesting session on Sierra Leone. UNAMSIL is now deployed. This is a critical test for the United Nations in terms of a peacekeeping operation in Africa. We want to get this one right. We are going to work as a Security Council very closely with the Secretariat and with the parties on the ground to make sure that it does go right. We want the membership of the United Nations to realize the importance of this, hence the public meeting, and, of course, to contribute not just political support but material support to what is a vital and an under-resourced operation. There are things happening on the ground that we still dislike, all of us: violations of the ceasefire, humanitarian abuse, kidnapping of medical people which we hope will end very quickly — and there was a lot of concern about that this morning. Sierra Leone is a very serious operation and we will maintain a very close eye on it in the Security Council. As the United Kingdom, we will maintain for the international community the leadership on that subject that we have had until now.

Angola (13 December 1999)

Members of the Security Council were briefed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hédi Annabi, on recent developments in Angola and on continuing United Nations efforts to establish a United Nations Office in Angola.

Members of the Council reiterated that the primary cause of the current crisis in Angola is the failure by the leadership of UNITA to comply with its obligations under the Lusaka Protocol, and again demanded that UNITA comply immediately and without conditions with its obligations. Members of the Council reaffirmed their belief that lasting peace and national reconciliation in Angola can only be achieved through political dialogue with all those genuinely interested in peace and stability.

Members of the Council welcomed the recent appointment of Ambassador Ibrahim Gambari as Special Adviser to the Secretary-General for special assignments in Africa, which include Angola.

Members of the Council stressed the importance of ensuring that the United Nations Office in Angola be rendered functional as soon as possible in accordance with Security Council resolution 1268 (1999). Members of the Council urged the Secretary-General to finalize arrangements with the Government of Angola on a status-of-mission agreement for the United Nations Office in Angola and to promptly appoint a head of the Office.

Members of the Council called on all concerned and, in particular, UNITA to ensure the safety, security and freedom of movement of United Nations and associated personnel and to respect fully their status. They reiterated their concern at the increase in mine-laying and called on all concerned, particularly UNITA, to cease mine-laying.

Members of the Council expressed deep concern at the dire humanitarian situation and called on all concerned to ensure compliance with human rights and international humanitarian law and to ensure humanitarian access to all members of the Angolan population in need. They expressed support for the consolidated inter-agency appeal for Angola and urged Member States to contribute to it. Members of the Council urged the Government of Angola and, in particular, UNITA, to ensure that the extension of State administration would continue to be done in the spirit

of the Lusaka Protocol and, in particular, to guarantee that the human rights of all Angolan citizens would be protected in this process.

Members of the Council emphasized that continued efforts to tighten existing Security Council sanctions against UNITA remain one of the keys to helping establish conditions for resumption of political dialogue. Members of the Council called upon all Member States to enforce compliance with such sanctions.

The two most important next steps for the Council are, first, to aid the Secretary-General in establishing a United Nations Office in Angola with the cooperation of the Government of Angola and to have a presence there that helps both the political and the humanitarian situation; and, second, to take forward the implementation of Security Council sanctions that apply to Angola and, through the Security Council sanctions committee, to make sure that they are applied as soon as possible. Behind that there is a good deal of political work by Security Council members and others to try to drive forward the idea of a political dialogue that leads to an end to the conflict there.

Cyprus (14 December 1999)

Security Council members today heard a briefing by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus, Alvaro de Soto, on the proximity talks held in New York from 3 to 14 December to prepare the ground for meaningful negotiations leading to a comprehensive settlement. The talks followed the Council's request to the Secretary-General in June 1999, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, to invite the leaders of the two sides to negotiations in the autumn. This is a matter which the Security Council continues to follow with the closest of interest. The Council has stated repeatedly that the status quo in Cyprus is unacceptable.

Council members welcomed the fact that the talks had been conducted throughout in a positive and constructive atmosphere, and without preconditions. They commended the commitment shown by the participants, and encouraged all concerned to continue their efforts towards a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus question. They looked forward to the continuation of the talks early next year, underlining the importance of the process now started.

Council members paid tribute in particular to the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Adviser, and conveyed to them the Council's full support in this important endeavour.

The Council will take action on 15 December to renew the mandate of UNFICYP.

Eritrea and Ethiopia (21 December 1999)

The Council heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Kieran Prendergast, on the current mediation efforts led by OAU. The Council members made it clear that they very strongly supported those mediation efforts. They recognize the discussion that was needed for those efforts. They therefore did not want to deal with any particular substance on the question of Ethiopia and Eritrea, given that the mediation is at quite an interesting stage.

Rwanda (21 December 1999)

Members of the Council have already begun their examination of the Carlsson report on Rwanda, a very important study of the events of 1994. They welcome the fact that the investigation by former Prime Minister Carlsson and his colleagues is being carried out with such thoroughness and frankness. Council members will want to have a further discussion once they have had the opportunity to consider in detail what the report contains, as well as the recent internal report on Srebrenica. Council members are in forward-looking mode on these two reports. They would like to see whether there may be important lessons for the United Nations and the Council to learn as regards peacekeeping in the future. The Council has in that way started serious consideration of those two reports.

Democratic Republic of the Congo (22 December 1999)

Council members were briefed both yesterday and today by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hédi Annabi, about continued fighting in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, particularly in Equateur Province in the north-west, and about a potentially dangerous situation developing in South Kivu. Council members were deeply concerned about the scale of recent fighting and the continuing disregard of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement.

They called on all parties to exercise the utmost restraint and to stop immediately any further violations of the ceasefire. They also urged the parties to convene an early meeting of both the Political Committee of the Lusaka Agreement and the Joint Military Commission, which is the place for disputes to be discussed, and to facilitate the deployment of local joint military commissions and United Nations liaison officers.

Council members reiterated the willingness of the United Nations and the international community to work with the parties to the Lusaka Agreement to implement the Agreement and to bring peace and stability to the region. They also pointed out that, in order to play its role in a peacekeeping operation in support of the Lusaka Agreement, the United Nations must be confident that the parties themselves are determined to respect the ceasefire and to refrain from all hostile acts and propaganda.

Sierra Leone (29 December 1999)

In its resolution 1270 (1999), the Security Council committed itself to supporting the Lome Agreement and to cooperating with all the parties to that end. It also said it would review the situation as it developed. Today, Council members were briefed on the latest developments in Sierra Leone, including the deployment of UNAMSIL, and on Nigeria's intention to withdraw its forces currently in ECOMOG early in the new year.

Council members paid tribute to Nigeria's role and that of other ECOMOG participants in efforts to bring peace and stability to Sierra Leone. They agreed that it was imperative to avoid any security vacuum in Sierra Leone and they discussed the changes that would be necessary to the mandate and strength of UNAMSIL as Nigeria withdraws from ECOMOG. They await further detailed information from the Secretariat.

Council members urged all parties to the Lome Agreement to honour their obligations and to cooperate fully in the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. In particular, they agreed that recent threats by Foday Sankoh not to cooperate with UNAMSIL were unacceptable and reminded him of his obligations under the Lome Agreement.

Council members will be keeping a close watch on developments and will hold a further discussion when the Secretariat makes further details available.

Guinea-Bissau (29 December 1999)

Council members heard a briefing by the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Ibrahima Fall, following the Secretary-General's report of 23 December, which itself followed on the 28 November elections in Guinea-Bissau.

Council members were pleased to note that the elections had been held in an open, fair and transparent manner — an important step in Guinea-Bissau's progress towards a fully-fledged democracy and normalcy. Council members commended the international community for the resources and personnel they committed to monitoring and observing the elections. Council members noted that the second round of elections would be held on 16 January. They encouraged all parties to ensure that this second round was conducted in the same open and fair manner.

Council members agreed with the Secretary-General's recommendation to extend the mandate of UNOGBIS to the end of March.

Finally, Council members noted that some progress had been made in the release of political and military prisoners, but they looked to the newly elected President, once he is in place, to complete that process as soon as possible.

UNITED NATIONS **A S**

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/54/755
S/2000/125
17 February 2000

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-fourth session
Agenda item 30
COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fifth year

Letter dated 15 February 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Romania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the Bucharest Declaration of the Third Meeting of Heads of State and Government of South-East European Countries, adopted on 12 February 2000 (see annex).

I would be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex were circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 30, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ion GORITZA
Ambassador

00-30266 (E) 180200

Annex

BUCHAREST DECLARATION OF THE THIRD MEETING OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH-EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

12 February 2000

We, the Heads of State and Government of the South-East European countries, Mr. Emil Constantinescu, Mr. Bülent Ecevit, Mr. Ljubco Georgievski, Mr. Mugur Isărescu, Mr. Ivan Kostov, Mr. Ilir Meta and Mr. Costas Simitis, met in Bucharest on 12 February 2000, at the Third Summit of the countries of this region. Present at the meeting were the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of these countries, Mr. Ismail Cem, Mr. Aleksandar Dimitrov, Mrs. Nadezhda Mihaylova, Mr. Paskal Milo, Mr. George Papandreou and Mr. Petre Roman, as well as Mr. Jadranko Prlić and Mr. Vladimir Drobnjak as observers and Mr. Bodo Hombach, special coordinator of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, as a special guest of the Chairman-in-Office.

This Third Summit of the countries of South-Eastern Europe constituted for us a new opportunity to continue our comprehensive dialogue. We have examined the prospects for enhanced stability, security and democracy in our region during the year 2000, a matter that concerns not only us, but also the whole European and Euro-Atlantic community. We have also considered ways and means to foster regional cooperation, aimed particularly at the economic and social growth of our countries and, in this context, the impact the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe could have on the progress and the prosperity of our region.

On the eve of the Third Millennium, we have reiterated the European orientation of our countries as an integral part of their objectives for political, economic and social development. It is our firm conviction that Europe cannot be complete without the countries of South-Eastern Europe, without their peoples representing old civilizations and cultures that have traditionally contributed to the formation of the contemporary European identity, enriching the European culture. We welcome the intensified efforts for widening European integration and we emphasize the needs for including the countries of the region in the process of deepening and broadening the European and Euro-Atlantic political, security and economic structures. Our endeavors to promote regional cooperation are also directly linked with the aspirations of our countries to speed up their integration in these structures.

In this last year of a century marked by devastating wars and conflicts, many of them originating from and affecting our region, as well as by dictatorial political regimes, we have signed today a Charter on Good Neighborly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in South-Eastern Europe, aimed at opening a new page in the history of our

region, whose future lies in peace, democracy, economic prosperity and full integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures. The Charter emphasizes our commitment for economic and democratic reforms. This Charter constitutes a genuine Code of Conduct for the relations among our countries and, at the same time, a real Action Program for our future cooperation in all areas of mutual interest. This Charter is the first common political document of this nature in the modern history of our region. Opened for the participation of all the countries belonging to the South-Eastern part of Europe, this Charter constitutes also a major political contribution of our countries to the implementation of the principles and the objectives of the Stability Pact.

While reviewing the state of our cooperation, as a major initiative coming from within the region, we have taken note with satisfaction of the large international recognition it received during the year 1999. The South-East European Cooperation Process was accepted by the last NATO Summit in Washington as contributing to the Alliance's effort to enhance regional security and was invited to be among the contributors to the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe. OSCE, reiterated at the Istanbul Summit in November its determination to work closely with other international organizations and institutions on the basis of the Platform for Co-operative Security for the promotion of comprehensive security within the OSCE area. In this context, we welcome the designation of a country from our region, Romania, as the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE in 2001 and a member of the OSCE Troika starting with the year 2000.

In this framework, we fully recognize our countries' responsibility to work within the international community to develop a shared strategy for stability and growth in this region and to cooperate with each other and with the international community to implement that strategy. At the beginning of year 2000, we solemnly declare that we are ready to assume our duties and to actively participate, alongside with the international community at large, in the peaceful settlement of the tensions and conflicts in our area and in preventing the breaking out of new conflicts in South-Eastern Europe. We are determined to further consolidate our cooperation and to do our utmost so that the end of this century marks the end of wars in our region, and that the shared Euro-Atlantic values of peace, democracy, prosperity and respect for human rights take root in South-Eastern Europe.

At the same time, convinced that the full normalization of the bilateral relations between all the states in the region plays a role of paramount importance in building up a climate of confidence and mutual understanding, we are determined to make every effort during the year 2000 to reach this goal. In this context, we encourage further simplification of the formalities in order to facilitate the circulation of persons, goods and capitals among our countries, and with the rest of Europe within the framework of the existing international obligations.

We are all concerned with the fact that the situation in some parts of our area continues to pose potential threats to the stability and security in the region. In spite of the international community's efforts, the prerequisites for a democratic and sustainable development are still to be achieved. The evolution of the situation in Kosovo will continue to influence the state-to-state and interethnic relations in the area and consequently the whole region. Against the background of years of repression, intolerance and violence in Kosovo, the challenge is now to build a democratic, multi-

ethnic and multi-cultural society, on the basis of substantial autonomy, taking full account of the Rambouillet accords, as well as the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, pending on a final settlement in accordance with UNSC Resolution 1244. Our countries have firmly supported this Resolution, which we expect to be fully implemented and strictly adhered to by all concerned. We reiterate today our conviction that this Resolution constitutes the solid base for a peaceful and lasting settlement of the Kosovo crisis. We reconfirm our countries' commitment to contribute, to the extent of their capabilities, towards achieving this objective.

Our countries strongly support the international civil and security presences in Kosovo, through the UNMIK, the KFOR, and the OSCE mission and we hope that they will be provided with the necessary resources and means to perform their duties. We welcome the high priority attached by them to guaranteeing security to all citizens in Kosovo, irrespective of their ethnic, religious or cultural background, so that all the residents of this province could contribute to and benefit from the creation of a peaceful and democratic society. While taking note of the improvement in the security climate in Kosovo, we strongly condemn the continuation of ethnically motivated violence, intolerance or threats, by the activity of various organized crime structures and/or individuals still present in the area and by other negative developments. We welcome the action taken by the international presence in Kosovo, for the implementation of all the provisions of the Resolution 1244, including strengthening the legal and institutional framework for assuring the public order and preparing local elections during this year. Considering that the administration of Kosovo should be carried on with the participation of the local population, we appeal to their leaders to work together and with the representatives of the international presences there, towards creating a multi-ethnic society where the rights of all citizens, all ethnic and religious communities are fully and equally respected.

At the OSCE Summit in Istanbul, last November, it was agreed that the democratic shortcomings of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia remain one of the fundamental sources of grave concern in our region. All responsible democratic political forces of this country must steer the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia firmly back on the path towards democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. We are now making an appeal to all the citizens of this country to embark upon a course of democracy and reconciliation, in order to bring back this state in the family of the international community. Our countries are ready to further promote the humanitarian assistance programs directed to the citizens of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, such as the EU "Energy for Democracy" and the twinning projects, in order to alleviate the impact of the sanctions on the population. We insist that no restrictions should be applied by the authorities to humanitarian operations on their territory. In this context, while considering the sanctions against FRY as an important mean for achieving the common objectives of the international community, we share the view that their implementation should avoid to the extent possible direct negative consequences on the Yugoslav citizens. We regret that prevailing circumstances precluded the presence of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia at this Summit, while reiterating the FRY's status as a participating country to the SEECP, in accordance with the provisions of the Crete and Antalya Summits documents. We agree to consider the FRY's chair as temporarily vacant, to be resumed as soon a onditions would allow it.

Our previous Summits dealt largely with the evolution of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, an observer state to the SEECP, considered as a test–case for Europe. We remain committed to a democratic, multi-ethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina based on the General Framework Agreement for Peace negotiated in Dayton and signed in Paris. We underline the importance of improving the functioning of this country's common institutions and of the continuing assumption of the tasks undertaken now by the international community. We appeal to the leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina to take decisive steps to bring its two entities closer together within their single state, in the interest of its citizens, of its stability and prosperity.

We reaffirm the particular importance of increased cooperation with NATO on security matters in the region, by participating in its specific mechanisms such as the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, the Partnership for Peace Program and the Consultative Forum on Security Matters launched by the Alliance following its Washington Summit. We commend the role of the South-Eastern Europe Defense Ministerial for the security dimension of our countries' cooperation and the activation of the Multinational Peace Force/South-Eastern Europe Headquarters established on a rotational basis in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. We are looking forward to the building up of the European Security and Defense Identity within the Alliance and declare our countries' willingness to cooperate with it. We welcome the adoption by the recent OSCE Summit in Istanbul of the Charter for European Security and, as OSCE participating countries, we reconfirm the commitments assumed herewith.

Our countries pay a great deal of attention to enhancing regional cooperation in fighting organized crime, illicit drug and arms trafficking and all forms of terrorism. In this context, we have been pleased to visit the SECI Regional Center for the Combating of Transborder Crime in Bucharest and we reconfirm our countries' determination to fully cooperate with this Center to attain our common goals in this field.

We express our appreciation to the European Union for launching the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe aimed at sustaining the countries in our region in their efforts to foster peace, democracy, respect for human rights and economic prosperity, in order to achieve stability in the whole area. We appreciate the first practical steps taken for the implementation of the Pact, in particular the first rounds of negotiations of the specific mechanisms of the Pact. In this context, we welcome the meeting of the Working Table on Economic Reconstruction, Development and Cooperation held recently in Skopje. We also welcome the commitments made by the Greek Government and the European Commission to allocate financial resources for future projects within the Stability Pact and we hope that the other Facilitator States and International Financing Institutions will act in the same direction. We acknowledge with satisfaction the establishment in Thessaloniki of the European Agency for Reconstruction, with a branch office in Pristina. We hope that new operational centers and branch offices will be established in each of the other countries in the region. We welcome the recent agreement in Brussels reached by Bulgaria and Romania, with the assistance of the Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact and the European Commission, which constitutes the solution concerning the construction of a second bridge between these countries on the Danube river, as a first successful step in the implementation of major regional projects under the aegis of the Stability Pact.

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Seven months after the launching of the Stability Pact, the implementation process is still at its beginning. We look forward to speedy action in the implementation of the various regional projects put in motion by the Working Tables. In this respect, we look to the Regional Financing Conference as a major test of the commitment by the international community to assisting the transition and the development of our countries towards stable democracies and open and viable economies, and to give a strong impetus to the implementation of the Stability Pact projects towards the level of the hopes of our peoples. We reiterate our strong commitment to reform and to carrying out the reform processes endorsed by the Stability Pact, starting with the investment compact and the anti-corruption initiative, as a pledge to the new and equal partnership brought about by the Pact. While understanding the long-term nature of the Pact, the lack of quick concrete results would jeopardize the credibility of the Stability Pact within the public opinion of our countries. We therefore call on the international community to live up to the expectations created by the Pact and respond adequately to the real needs of our countries and our region. Without underestimating the other dimensions of the Pact, we place a strong emphasis on its economic dimension, which will require the biggest share of the financial resources. We hope that transparency for project evaluation, selection, approval and financing shall be assured so that the implementation of projects under the aegis of the Stability Pact starts as soon as possible. Our countries will make the utmost efforts to fulfil the responsibilities assumed in the Stability Pact. We also believe that financing the reform process will be paramount to its success and will significantly contribute to the improvement of the business climate in South-Eastern Europe.

We have stressed our countries' willingness, as participants in the Stability Pact, to be actively involved in projects for reconstruction in Montenegro and Kosovo, FRY, as early beneficiaries of the Stability Pact, as well as in the rest of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, when conditions would permit it. Our countries' interests are also going towards promoting major regional infrastructure projects supporting the economic development of South-Eastern Europe, securing international support for increasing trade in the area and for creating a friendly investment climate, aimed at enhancing cross-border cooperation and achieving sustainable growth in the region. We have noted with interest the commitment made by the major facilitators of the Stability Pact to develop specific tools to allow an active participation of companies from our countries in procurement and services for reconstruction and development projects in the region, through fair and transparent competition, according to multilaterally agreed principles.

We positively appreciate the recent involvement of the European Commission in the efforts for restoring the navigation on the Danube, by offering financial assistance to the Danube Commission for this purpose and look forward to the early implementation of this initiative. The Yugoslav authorities should respect their obligations stemming from the Belgrade Convention of 1948 to facilitate the international efforts to this end. We expect that this major European waterway be soon reopened for free navigation in the Novi Sad area, to the benefit of promoting European trade. We also hope, while embarking effectively upon the implementation of the Stability Pact, that solutions will be found for direct or indirect compensation of the losses our countries registered as a result of the conflict in Kosovo, starting with the two most affected states, as well as for taking progressive steps towards the alleviation of the negative effects on the economy of our countries by the sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Bearing in mind the role and the potential of the SEECP in promoting a common approach aimed at fostering regional cooperation, we have substantiated the efforts made within our initiative to harmonize and coordinate the positions of the participating countries towards the implementation of the Stability Pact. The document "Preliminary Proposals of the SEECP Countries for the Stability Pact" provided a first joint platform outlining the common needs and expectations of our countries from the Stability Pact. We reaffirm the primary responsibility of our countries for achieving the goals of the Stability Pact, including their involvement in the current decision making process to set up the priorities of regional projects, for a proper allocation of resources. We believe that SEECP is in the position to fully participate in the establishment of priorities of such projects, whether they are promoted by the interested countries or they are on the lists of other regional initiatives our countries are participating in. We task the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of our countries with preparing suggestions for a specific SEECP mechanism that will set the priorities for regional projects in the Stability Pact framework, with the view to preparing an Action Plan for their implementation.

We have highly appreciated the activities carried on within the SEECP by our countries' Ministers of Foreign Affairs since the last SEECP Summit in Antalya, which contributed to a great extent to the promotion of this regional initiative in the international community. We have also commended the industrious work of the political directors.

We express our warm thanks for the hospitality of Romania for hosting the Bucharest Summit Meeting of the South-East European Cooperation Process.

We have decided that the next meeting of Heads of State and Government of the participating countries to the SEECP will take place in Skopje at the beginning of year 2001.